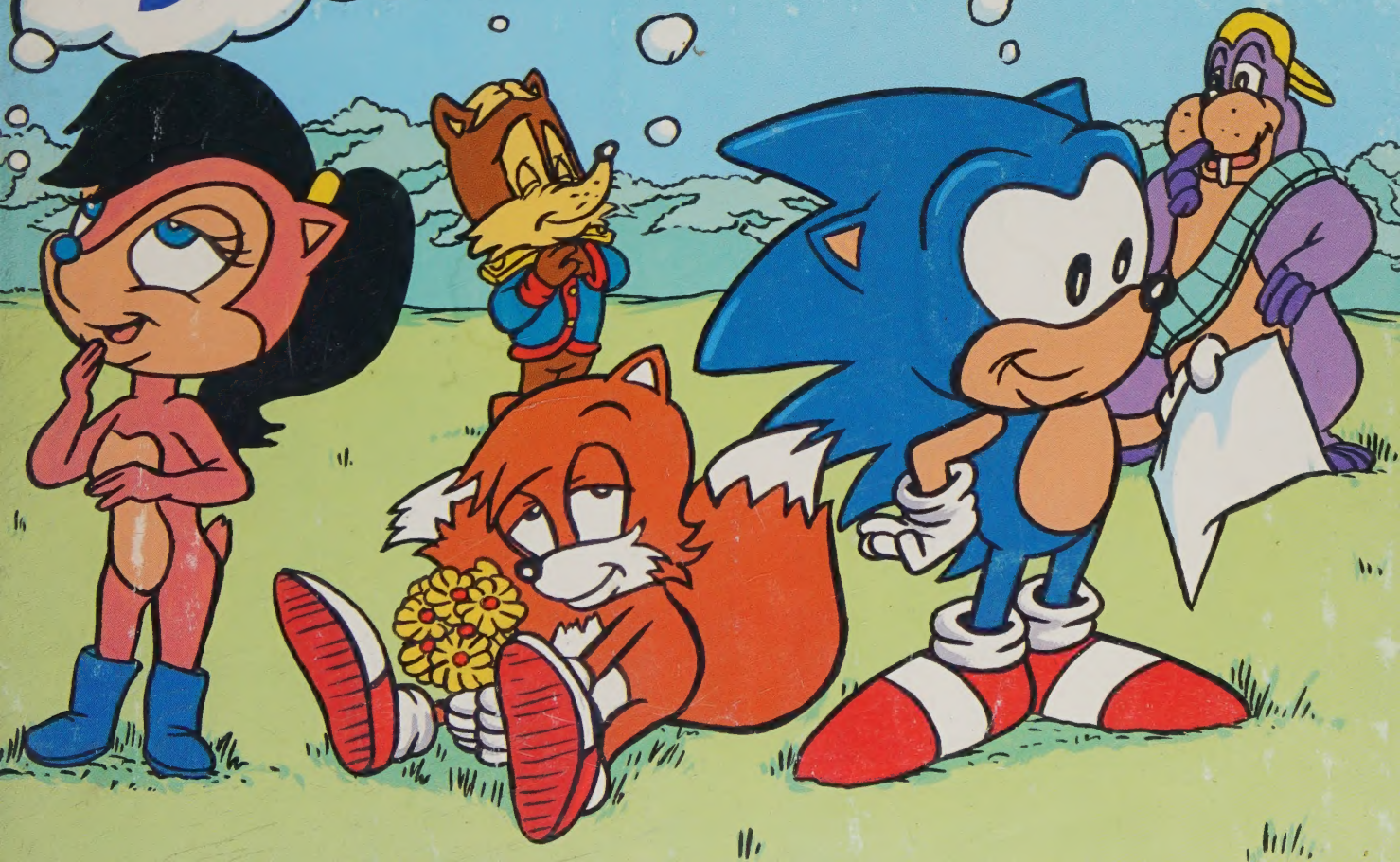
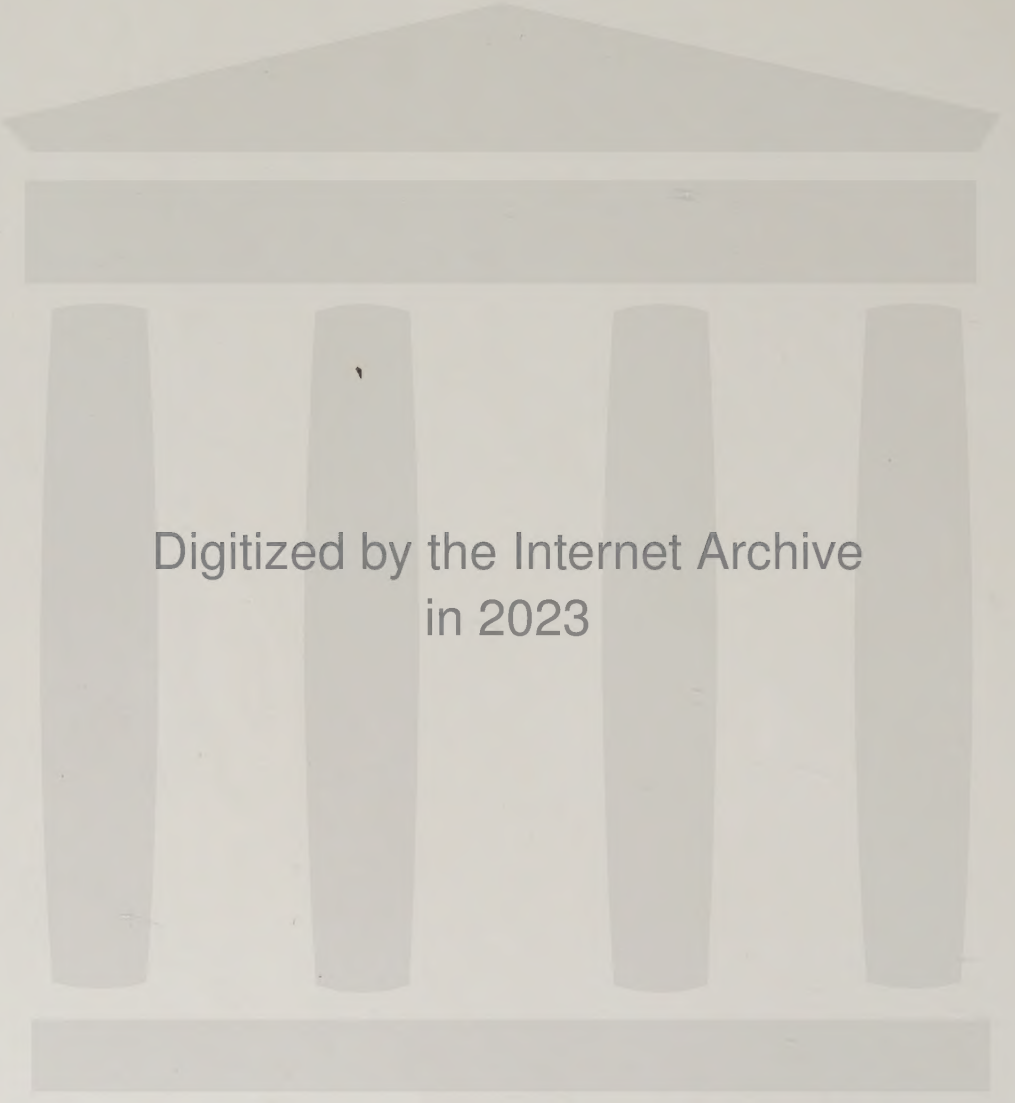




SONIC
THE
HEDGEHOG **2**™

THE SECRET ADMIRER





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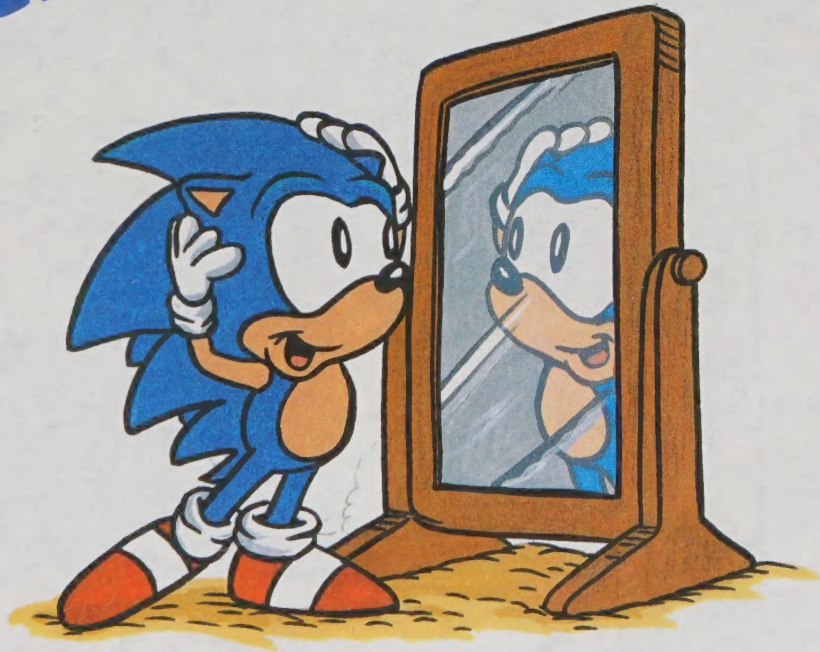
SONIC
THE HEDGEHOG **2**™

THE SECRET

ADMIRER

Story by John Michlig

Illustrated by Art Mawhinney



Dedicated in memory of Jeffrey Scott Davey, age 7,
one of Sonic's greatest fans.

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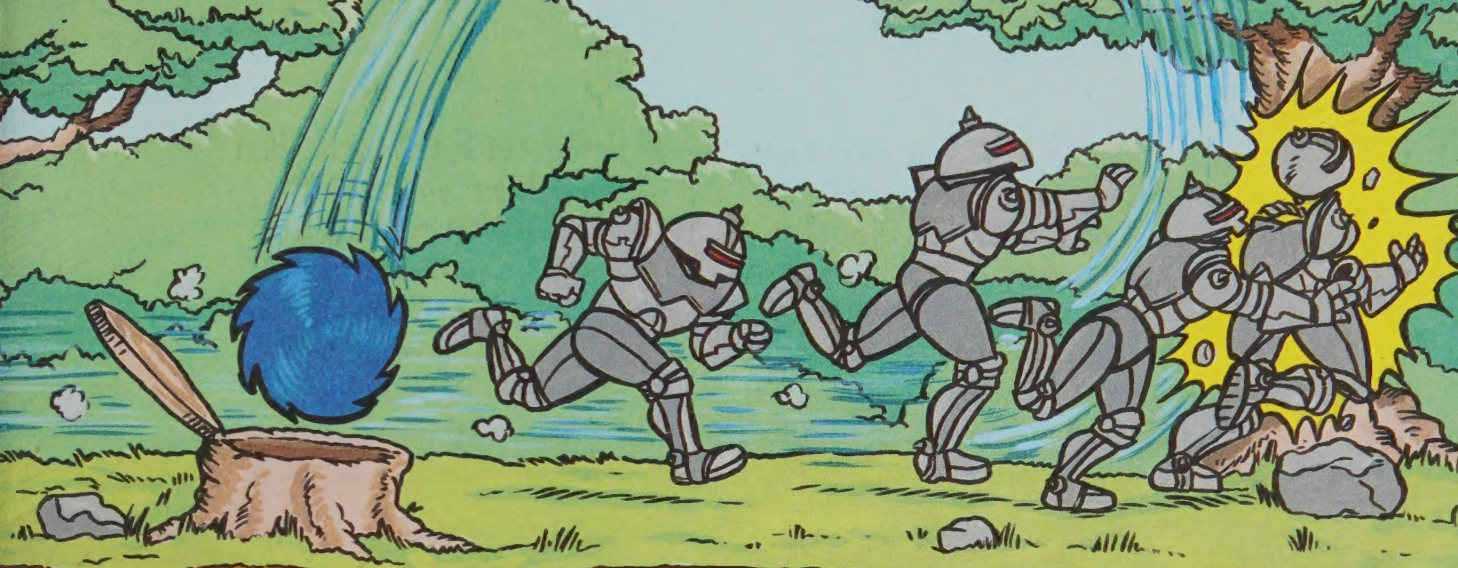
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Whooshing at the speed of sound, Sonic The Hedgehog roared through the woods of the planet Mobius, laughing as he dodged trees and boulders with the greatest of ease. Far behind, an angry swarm of Dr. Robotnik's metallic morons gasped for breath as they tried to catch up.

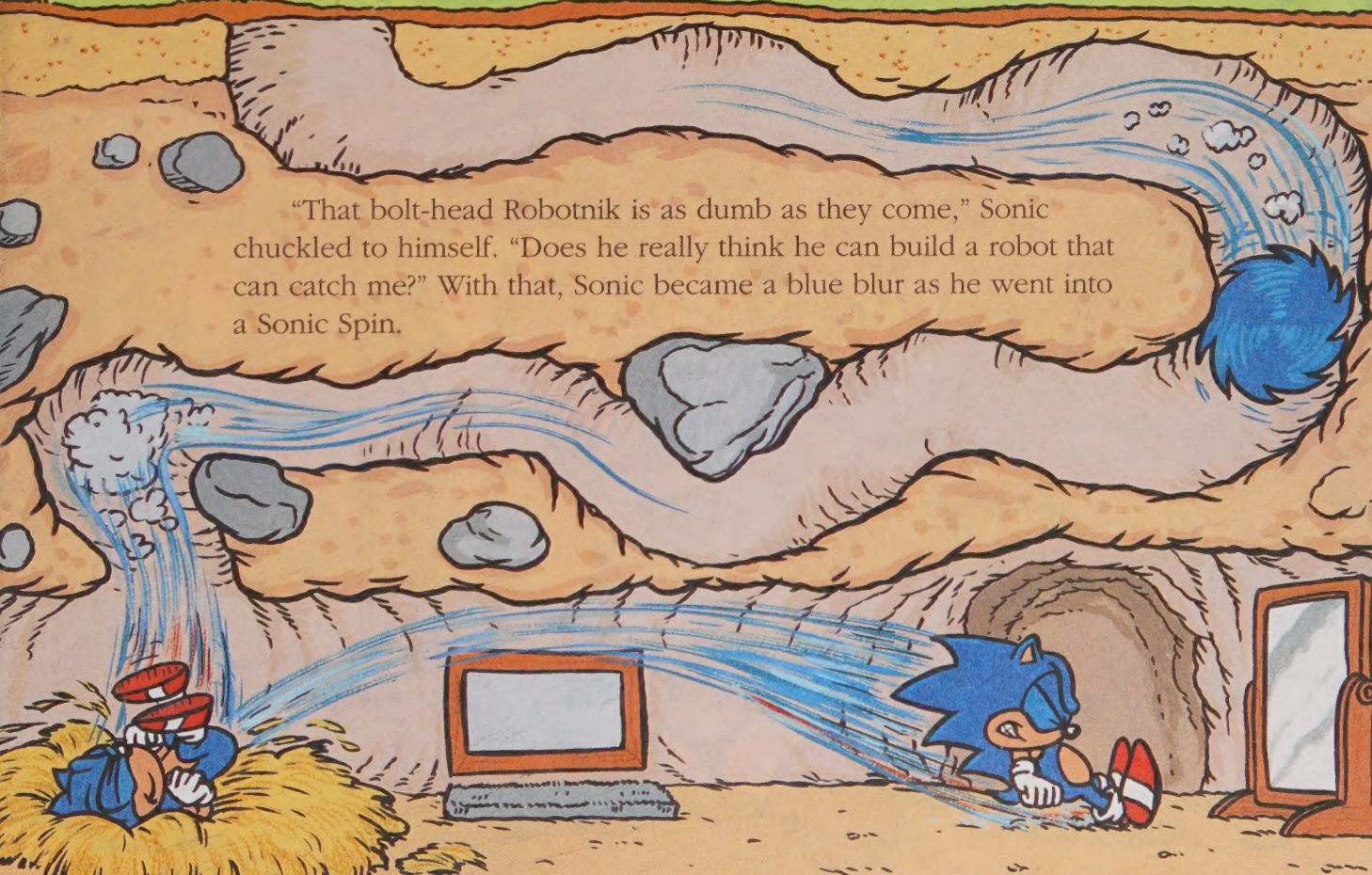


WELCOME
TO MY CITY.
OBSERVE THESE RULES.

1. NO SMILING, LAUGHING, OR GIGGLING
2. NO MUSIC OR DANCING
3. NO TOYS ALLOWED
4. ALL CANDY MUST BE GIVEN TO ROBOTNIK
5. NO BLUE HEDGEHOGS ALLOWED
6. ALL WHO ENTER MUST WORK IN THE ROBOT FACTORY
7. NO NINTENDO PLAYING



“That bolt-head Robotnik is as dumb as they come,” Sonic chuckled to himself. “Does he really think he can build a robot that can catch me?” With that, Sonic became a blue blur as he went into a Sonic Spin.

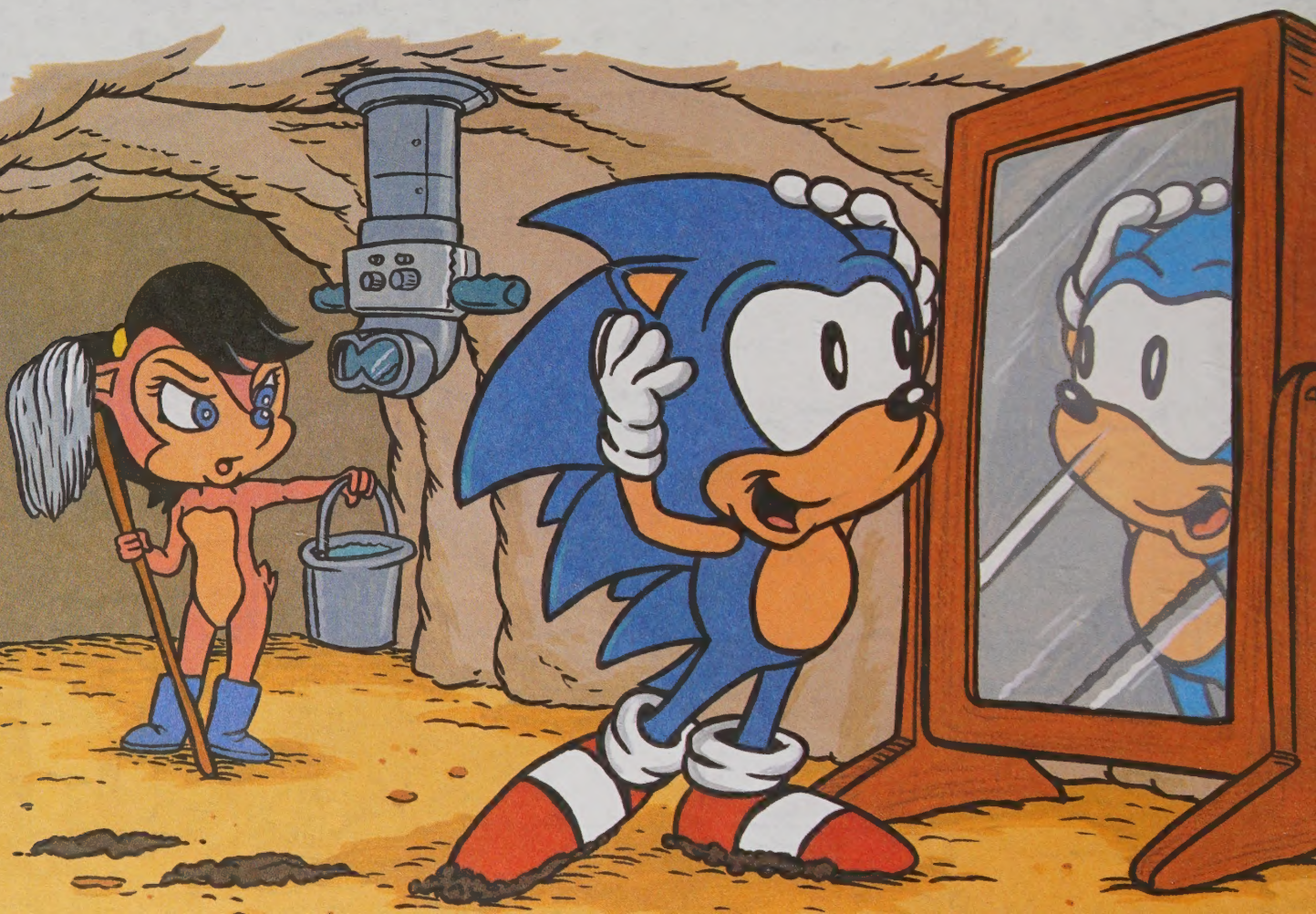


"Speed, skill, and good looks," Sonic thought aloud as he headed into his cave. "The keys to my success! Another job well done."

"I notice that you didn't include brains in that list," Princess Sally said, appearing from the shadows of the cave. Sally was Sonic's good friend and fellow Freedom Fighter. She added, "You still have to learn to wipe the mud off of your shoes when you come in!"

Sonic scowled as he mopped. "It's hard enough to be heroic. Leave it to you to find something wrong with just about anything."

Princess Sally chuckled. "It's no picnic keeping you in line either."



"Picnic!" they exclaimed together.

"We nearly forgot that we have to meet the rest of the Freedom Fighters in the woods to try out Rotor's surprise new invention," Sonic said as he zipped around gathering supplies.

"And I'm in charge of bringing ketchup!" Sally exclaimed. "Poor Tails can't eat anything without globs of ketchup on it!"



They arrived to see the rest of the Freedom Fighters gathered around the picnic table, impatiently waiting for the tardy twosome. Antoine, the best cook in Knothole Village, was doing his best to keep everything warm.

"Sorry, gang!" Sally said. "Sonic needed extra time to mop up."

"We can tell stories later," Sonic said suddenly. "Can't you see that these people are hungry? Bring on the chili dogs, Chef Antoine!"



Sonic ate all his food before the others and looked at the grill.

"I see you've noticed my smogless portable grill, Sonic," Rotor said with pride. "I call it the Smogsucker 2000. This dome on top has a suction device that draws the smoke up, through these tubes, and into this storage canister."

"Uh... that's neat, I guess," Sonic said. "But I was actually noticing that there's still one more chili dog left to eat!"





"Well *I* am very impressed, Rotor," Princess Sally said. "This is truly a wonderful surprise. Now Antoine can do his awesome cooking at our picnics without worrying about Robotnik or his rotten robot army seeing the smoke and breaking up the party!"

"Hooray for Rotor!" Tails said. "Another great invention!" Everyone cheered "Hip hip, hooray" three times before getting ready to head back to the village.

"Since you and I made everyone wait, Sonic, the least we can do is carry Rotor's special grill," Sally said.

"I'll carry the middle!" exclaimed Tails, always eager to help his idol, Sonic.

"Oh, all right," Sonic said. "Let's just hurry up and get back—I'm hungry again. Load up the Smokesnorter thingy and . . ."

"That's Smogsucker 2000," Rotor said as he handed the hefty load to Sonic.



As they walked, the group found a basket on the path. It contained Solar Sugar Snap Snacks and a note that said, "I THINK YOU'RE KEEN!"

Rotor picked it up and said, "How nice! I forgot it was my birthday!"

Antoine sighed. "Your birthday is four months from now, Einstein."

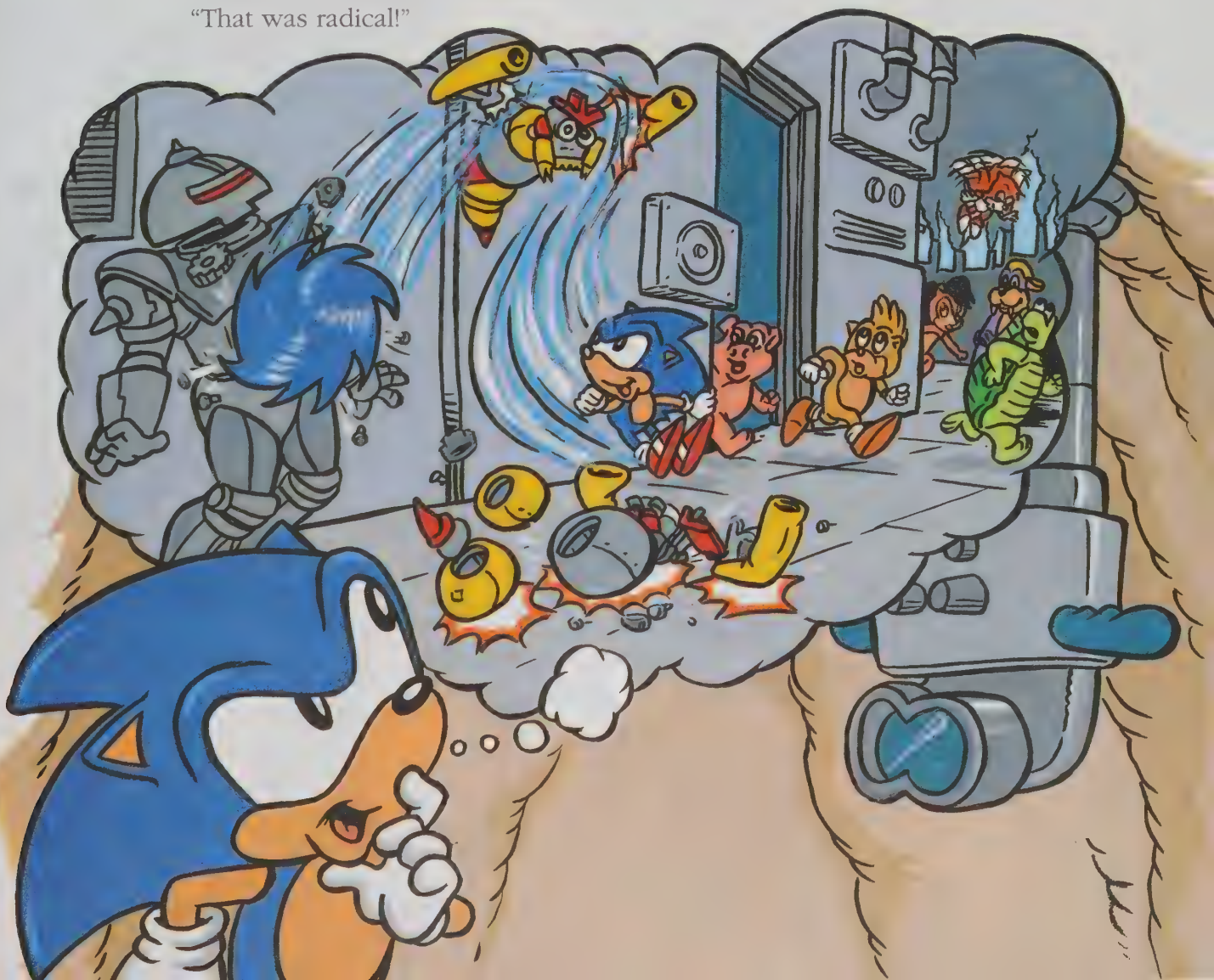
Sonic quickly snatched it away. "It's obviously for me. How many other brave, speedy, and handsome blue hedgehogs do you see here?"

"There's no name on this present, Mr. Humble," said Sally. "It could be for any one of us! Everyone cover your eyes, and I'll hide it in the woods until we discover who it's for."



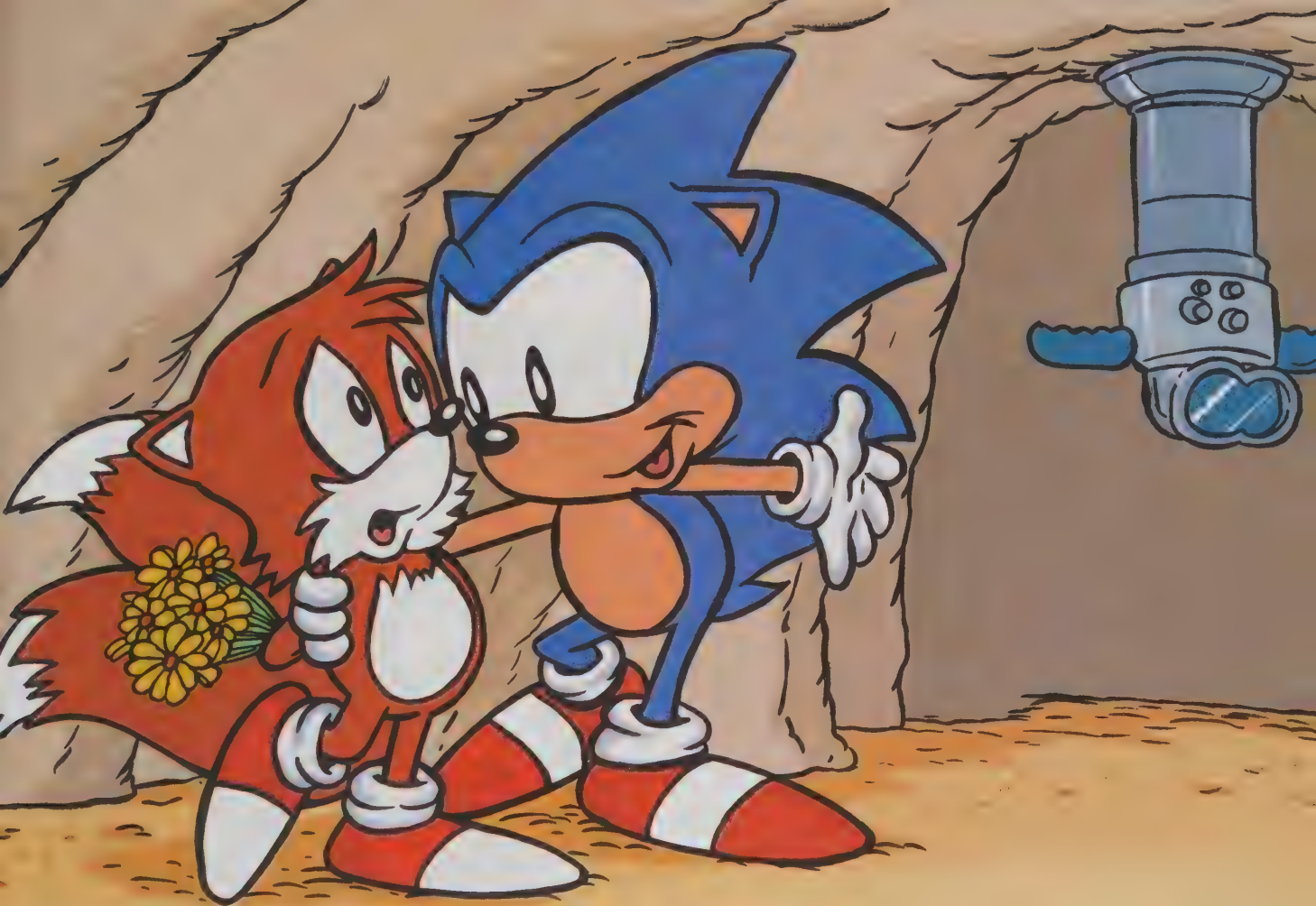
Once back in the village, Sonic paced the floor. It was his turn to man the Spy-Scope, but he spent more time wondering where Sally hid the basket and about which of his super deeds had impressed his secret admirer the most.

"Probably the time last week when I freed the workers at Robotnik's Buzzbomber-making factory," Sonic thought to himself. "That was radical!"



In the meantime, in his room, Antoine was thinking the very same thing. "I wonder who this could be. Could it be Princess Sally, impressed with my bravery, heroism, and elegant cooking skills? Perhaps it was that amazing rescue I pulled off at Robotnik's Buzzbomber-making factory last week."





Back in the Spy-Scope room, Sonic cornered Tails.

"Tails, my buddy! My pal!" Sonic said, putting his arm around the small fox. "How would you like to take my turn at the Spy-Scope so I can . . . uh . . . help Rotor clean his lab."

Normally, Tails would have jumped at the chance to do a favor for Sonic, but today he answered nervously.

"Sorry, Sonic," he replied. "But I have to . . ."

"Are those flowers in your hand, Tails?" Sonic asked, then he fell to the floor laughing. "You think *you* have a secret admirer? Ha ha ha ha! Go ahead—say 'hi' to her from me. HA ha ha!"

After Tails left, Sonic got up and dusted himself off.



"I hope Tails doesn't embarrass himself. He's a good kid," Sonic thought as he put his eye to the Spy-Scope.

"What's this!" Sonic spied a message spelled out with rocks on a nearby hillside: "TO MY FAVORITE FREEDUM FIGHTER—MEET ME AT MUD LAKE TODAY. FOLLOW THE TRAIL OF BASKETS AND YOU WILL FIND ME. I THINK YOU'RE KEEN!"

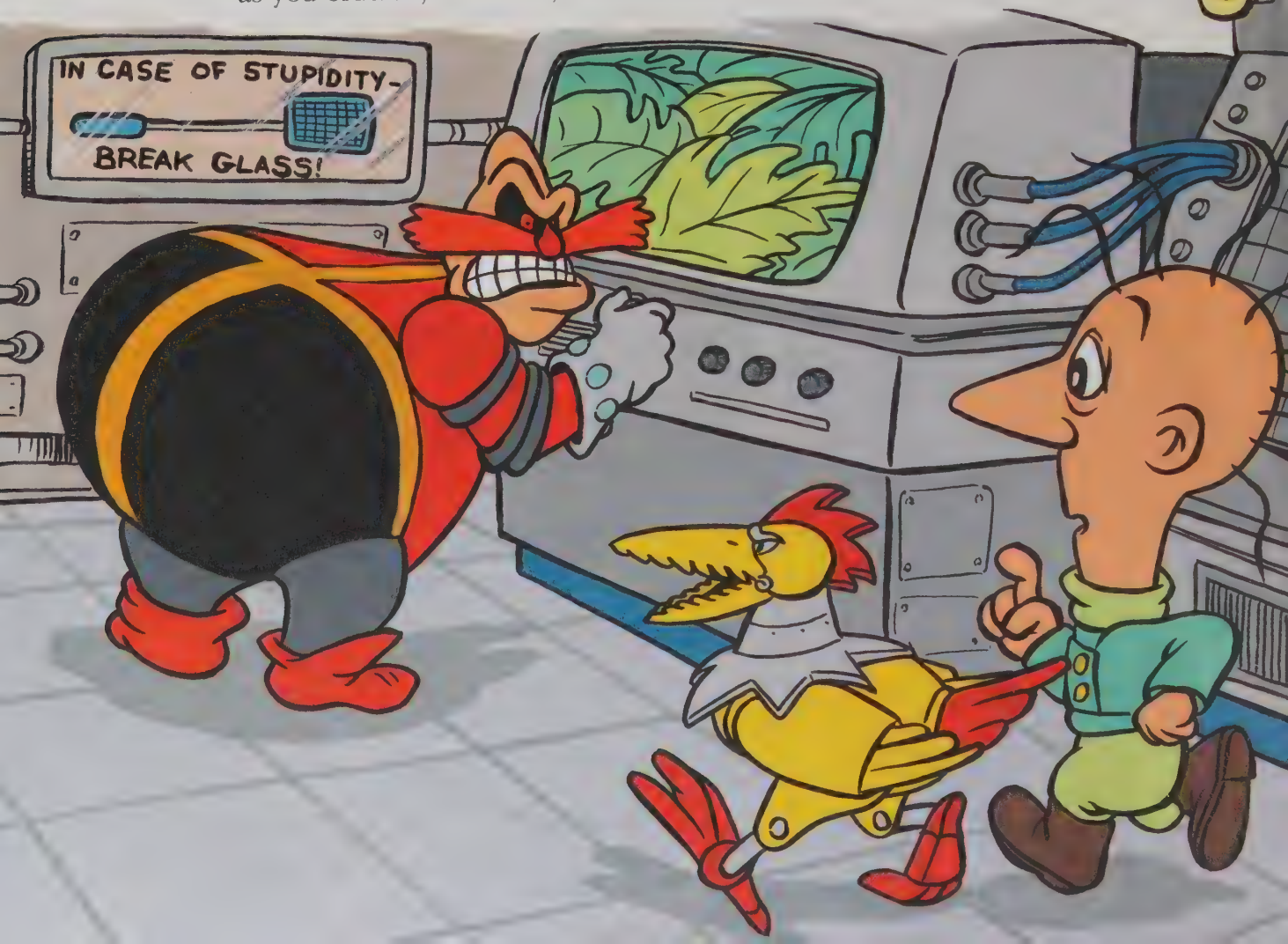
"Not a very good speller," Sonic said to himself. "Oh, my gosh! Bad speller or not, I can't keep this poor girl waiting. Where are my clean socks? Maybe I should wear a tie!"

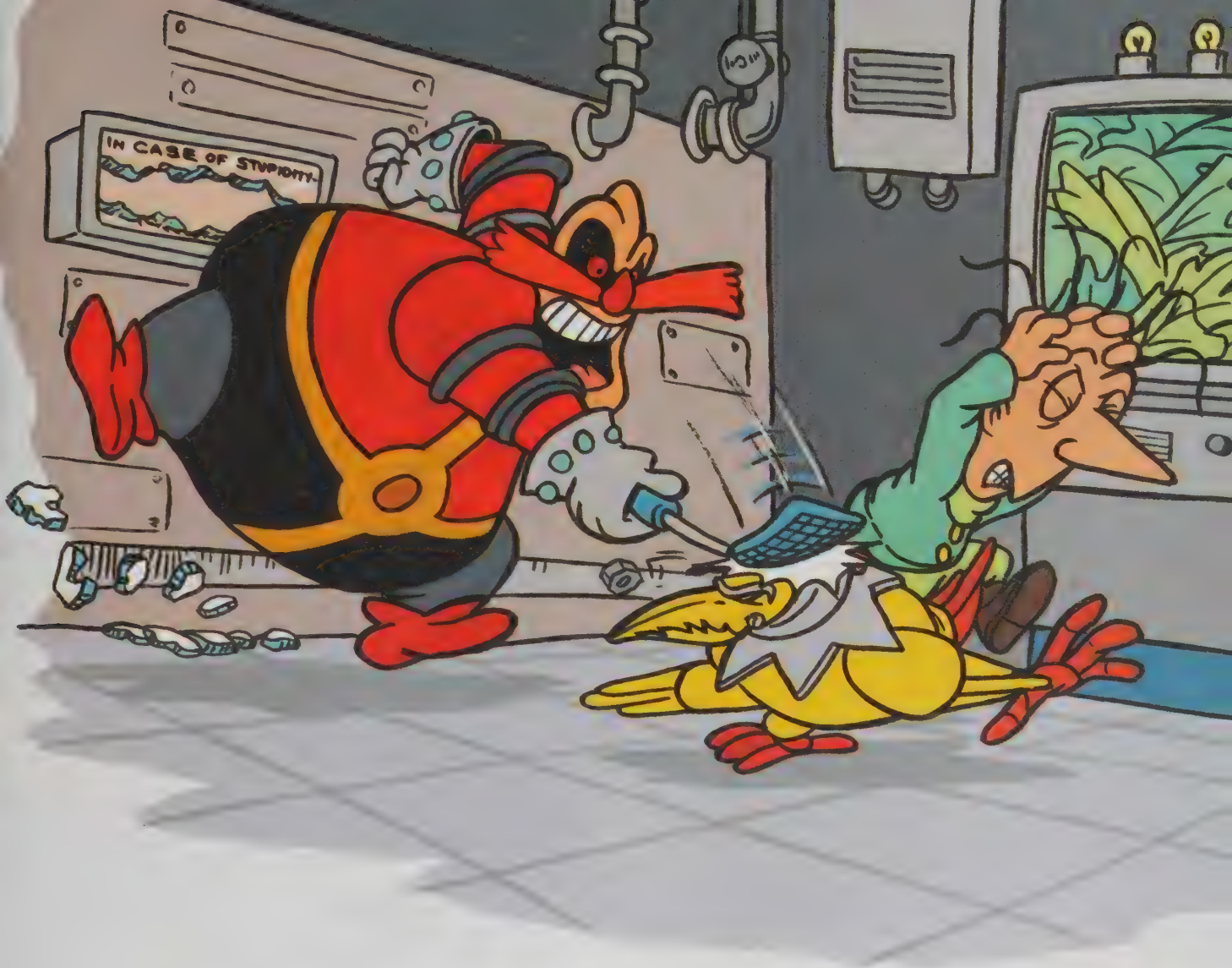


Meanwhile, in the dark fortress of Dr. Robotnik, the evil genius scowled at a screen full of leaves. "Drat that do-gooder Princess Sally," he hissed. "The hidden camera in that basket of goodies would have led us straight to Knothole Village if she'd returned with it instead of putting it behind a clump of bushes."

His bungling badniks, Cluck and Snively, bumped into the room.

"We finished the message on the hillside and made the trails just as you ordered, O fat one," Cluck said.





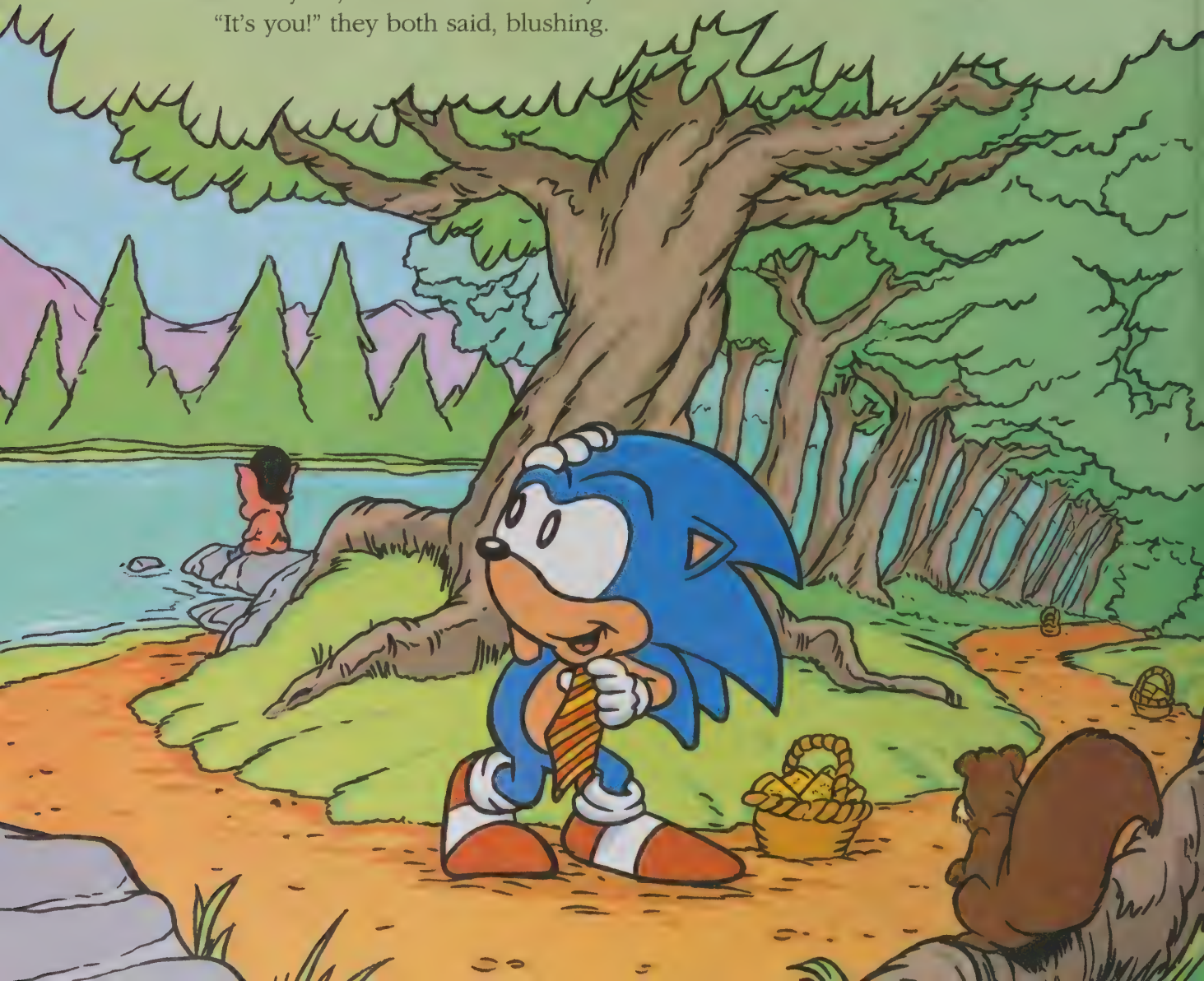
"It took many baskets of goodies to show the way," Snively reported. "Do you think we should be giving them all that stuff?"

"You brainless buckets of bolts!" Robotnik thundered as he swatted his henchmen. "The brilliance of this plan is that they will *all* think the message is for them alone! Our goody trails will entice the wretched group to the lake, where waiting Buzzbombers will spring my trap! We'll return victorious with the captured Freedom Fighters!"

Sonic arrived at the lake in record time and hid behind a small tree. Soon he noticed a girl sitting on a rock near the shore.

"Time to turn on the famous Sonic charm!" he thought to himself as he approached the mysterious figure. When he zipped in front of her to say 'hi,' he saw Princess Sally!

"It's you!" they both said, blushing.



Just then, Antoine came walking over a hill wearing his best uniform, and Tails appeared from another direction.

"Well, except for Rotor, the gang's all here," Sonic said.

"Actually, Rotor's right behind me," Antoine said, "and he brought his Smogsucker 2000 so I can cook for me and my secret . . . ah . . ."

"You think Sally left the baskets and message for you?" Sonic exclaimed.

"Wait!" Sally said. "I didn't leave any baskets or message. I thought . . ."



"You all thought wrong!" roared Robotnik as he suddenly appeared, leading an enormous squad of Buzzbombers. "We're your secret admirers! Get 'em, Buzzers!"

"Uh-oh!" Tails shouted as he frantically pitched rocks at the swarming robots. "There's too many of them for us to fight!"

"And we're surrounded on all sides!" Antoine cried in a panic.



"Never fear, Sonic's here! Time to smoke out some badniks!" With that, the quick-thinking blue bolt of bravery yanked the cap off the Smogsucker 2000 storage tank and became a blue blur, spinning wild circles that sent thick smoke billowing in all directions.

The confused Buzzbombers began to crash into one another. Some fell into the lake, where they scattered in a burst of sparks.

Sensing that he may be next to fall into the water, Robotnik retreated.



"*Cough-cough*. Blast you furry fools!" Robotnik bellowed as he zipped away. "That-*back-ack*—wasn't fair! *I'm* supposed to be the sneaky one here!"

"All is fair in love and war . . . and this is war!" Sonic called as he scooped up Antoine's picnic basket and headed home with the other Freedom Fighters.

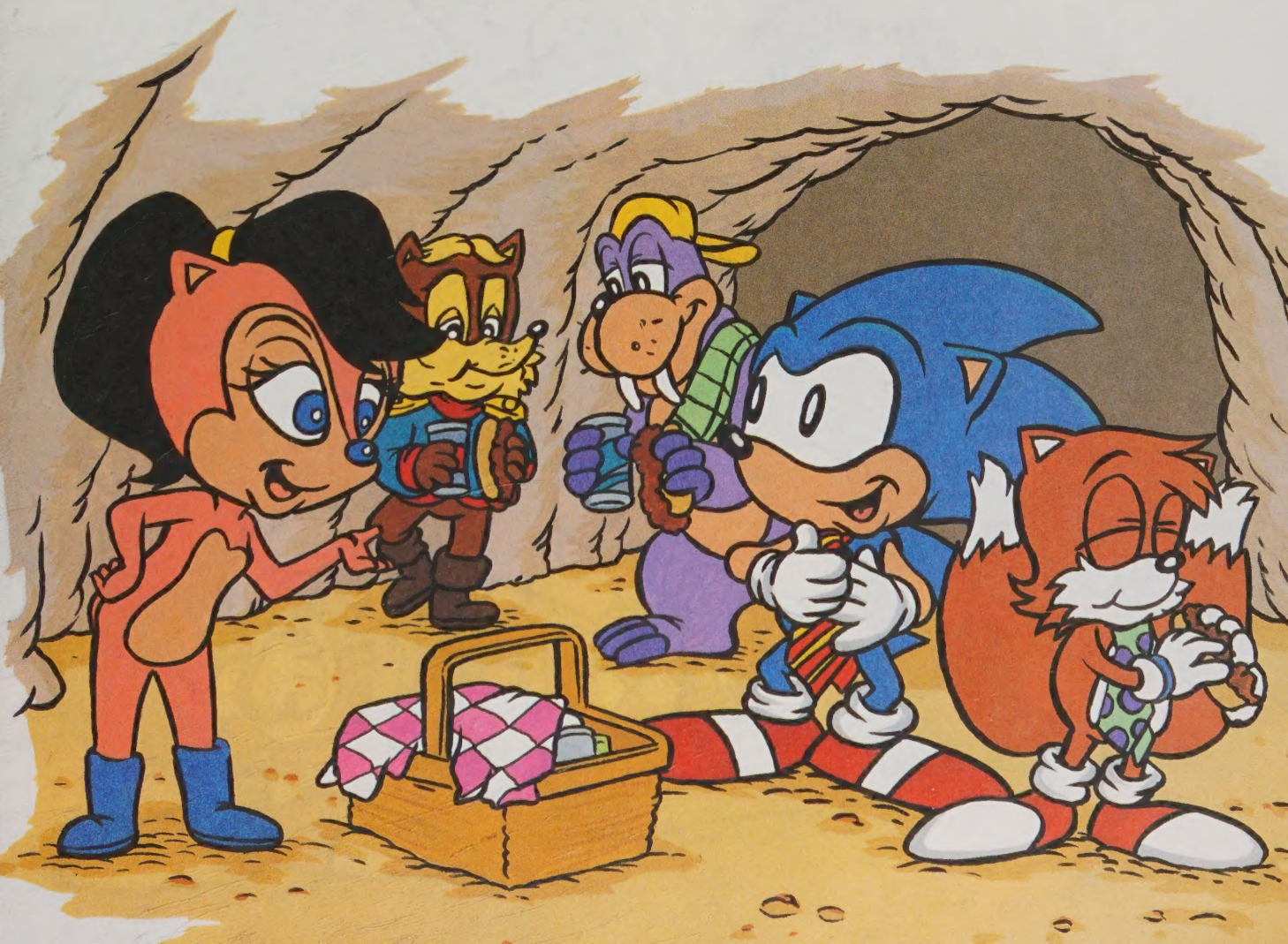


Once safely back in Knothole Village, it was time to sort out the situation.

"I bet you're sorry to discover that I'm not your secret admirer, aren't you, Sally," Sonic said with a gleam in his eye.

"I never thought it was you, Mr. Humble," Sally replied.

"Remember, I saw the same message as everyone else. Leave it to a Robotnik-made badnik to misspell 'freedom'. Still, it's too bad you boys don't dress like this every day. You look so *nice* in your ties."



"You mean they all look nice in *my* ties, Princess Sally," Antoine said in a huff. "Now, would you both please return them and stay out of my closet in the future?"

"Here, Ant," Sonic said as he tugged off the neckwear. "I don't ever want to get tied down anyway."





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